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The fact is that we cannot escape from the philosophic implications of either poet. If we do not in some measure surrender to the poet, we cannot really care for him, and if we do, we are under the psychological necessity of carrying into our lives some effects of the poet's mood. If there is any subtle falsity in this mood—falsity inherent in the very quality of his feeling or expression—then we are sure to encounter the baneful effects of it, unless we are guarded by an intelligent, inclusive criticism. It is of no use to tell us that Shelley is in his main drift simply a great preacher of liberty or a lover of spiritual beauty; for what we shall get from Shelley, if we get anything that is Shelleyan at all, is not his main drift, but the intimate quality of his thought and emotion, his way of taking life. There is no escape from this dilemma except through sheer hedonism on the one hand or through a criticism confined to barren questions of technique or literary "taste" on the other.

Thus, while Stopford Brooke has written good criticism, he has not written great criticism; for a criticism which, while dealing with human values, does not really seek for the larger reconciling ideas, and which always in a pinch leans toward a theological standard (the chapter on Byron's *Cain* is virtually a sermon, though an uncommonly good one) cannot be called great.

DOMESDAY BOOK. By Edgar Lee Masters. New York: The Macmillan Company.

This latest and most portentous work of Mr. Masters may be roughly compared in idea to Browning's *The Ring and The Book*. Like the latter poem, Mr. Masters' versified narrative tells the story of a life from many different points of view, and seems to say finally that concerning the true inwardness of human experience, God only knows. It is true that while Browning obtained his material from an old book, Mr. Masters appears to have derived his largely from a conscientious reading of the newspapers; and that he seems to say, "God only knows," with a somewhat different accent. These divergencies do not, however, vitiate the comparison. Newspapers may be quite as good artistic material as a book, however old and worm-eaten, and in these days every one may be considered free to say "God only knows," in whatever accent he pleases.

To be more precise, Mr. Masters tells the story of a girl's life as it gradually comes to light through the investigations of an extraordinary coroner's jury, a jury presided over by a philosopher who is not content till he has exposed every phase of the dead woman's experience from childhood onwards and traced the "riffles" her life made in the lives of other people to the point where the waves of influence become microscopic and imperceptible. Misunderstandings that ruin young lives, illicit love affairs, spasms of goodness, the love of freedom, the value of courage in the pursuit of one's own destiny—all these are treated *in extenso*, with much reportorial straightforwardness and some philosophy: the report of a post-mortem examination is given in all

its technical detail—nothing is withheld; for this, you see, including the physician's reasons for concluding that the young woman "had lived," are all a part of the general mess of life, as we know it, and as we make it.

In criticizing this extraordinary product of imaginative thought, the reviewer feels that it is best not to involve himself in obscure questions regarding the nature of poetry or in possible sophistries about the value of boldness, originality, or fearless self-expression in literature. Nor does he wish to make any unjustifiable assumptions about the author's purpose in writing.

The fact remains that this extraordinarily long, extremely pedestrian, excessively realistic poem, does seem to be trying, and insistently trying, to say something. Some investigation of the general considerations that prompted its writing (if not of its exact purpose or message) must therefore be the first—as it will be, in the case of the present reviewer, the last—task of the critic.

After reading the whole thing conscientiously through, and after temporarily and provisionally surrendering oneself to the author's point of view, whatever it may be, one leans to the judgment that this is a work written by one of William James's "tough-minded" people for the benefit of the "tender-minded," falsely conceived as unimaginative or cowardly in their unwillingness to face the facts of life. The fallacy—"Whoever does not think and write as I do is afraid of the truth"—is of course implicit in the work of many realists of a certain type. It maybe, that they do not actually entertain this view; but if not, it is a little difficult to understand their insistence upon facts of a certain kind. They seem to be endeavoring to wake up a certain portion of the public from a supposed moral and mental sloth. Such, as nearly as one can guess, is the motive of Mr. Masters: that there is another and artistic motive does not clearly appear.

Let it be said, then, that if there be any one who does not clearly realize that life is infinitely complex, that it is in the last analysis practically impossible to assign responsibility for evil, that much good may be where convention sees only evil, that there are daily tragedies where custom recognizes only sordid immorality—if there be any one who is not convinced of these things already or cannot learn them from his own observations and the daily papers, he may derive great benefit from reading Mr. Masters' book. But those to whom these things are commonplaces will perhaps not care to wade through the poem; for they will find in it little philosophy, little impulse or exaltation, little of anything that they cannot think or imagine for themselves, or read in the proper sources of information; but rather such surprising things as the details of a post-mortem, seldom given to the public.

THE ROMANCE OF MADAME TUSSAUD'S. By John Theodore Tussaud. New York: George H. Doran Company.

There are few more fascinating footnotes to history than those which are supplied in this volume.